

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 ACDA-10 IO-14 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05

H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01

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FM AMCONSUL BELFAST

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1765

INFO AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

UNCLAS BELFAST 279

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PINS, UK

SUBJECT: NORTHERN IRELAND VIOLENCE - DISPARATE INDICATIONS

1. RECENT TERRORIST ACTIVITY APPEARS TO GIVE DISPARATE INDICATIONS. THERE MAY BE IMPLICATION OF PROVISIONAL IRA WEAKNESS AND LESS DISCRIMINATION IN THEIR CHOICE OF TARGETS.

2. AN ARRIVAL IN BELFAST LAST WEEK QUICKLY LISTED A NUMBER OF TERRORIST ACTS: SMALL FIRE BOMBS PLACED IN BELFAST STORES, A GIRL TARRED AND FEATHERED IN LONDONDERRY, LETTER BOMBS POSTED -- ONE TO AN OLDER, NOW INACTIVE PROVISIONAL IRA LEADER, AND ANOTHER THAT BLEW OFF THE HAND OF AN INCAUTIOUS BRITISH SOLDIER. BUT A SENIOR POLICE OFFICIAL COMMENTED AUGUST 26 THAT -- PUTTING ASIDE THE DISTURBANCES ASSOCIATED WITH THE QUEEN'S VISIT (BELFAST 257 AND PREVIOUS) -- THE MONTH WAS ENCOURAGINGLY QUIET.

3. THAT COMMENT DID NOT STAND. IN LONDONDERRY AUGUST 26 A TEENAGE SOLDIER WAS SERIOUSLY WOUNDED BY A PROVISIONAL IRA PISTOLMAN AT A SECURITY BARRIER. A DEAF-MUTE WAS SHOT IN THE LEG THE NEXT DAY. AND THEN BEGAN A SERIES OF MURDER ATTEMPTS ON SOLDIERS AND POLICE IN BELFAST: A SOLDIER ON PATROL UNCLASSIFIED

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WAS SHOT DEAD THE 28TH, AND A NEARBY CHILD OF NINE WAS HURT SLIGHTLY BY A RICOCHET OR FRAGMENT. ON THE 30TH A SOLDIER ON PATROL WAS HURT SLIGHTLY BY A RICOCHET. ON THE 31ST IN THE AFTERNOON A SOLDIER GUARDING A SECURITY BARRIER WAS HIT IN THE ARM BY ONE OF THREE SHOTS, TWO CHILDREN WERE INJURED BY FRAGMENTS FROM A MISSILE (DESCRIBED BY THE PRESS AS AN ANTI-TANK ROCKET) AIMED AT ANY ARMY VEHICLE,

AND THAT NIGHT A SOLDIER ON PATROL DIED AFTER RECEIVING TWO OF THREE SHOTS. FINALLY, A POLICEMAN SEPTEMBER 1 WAS HURT IN THE EYE BY FRAGMENTS FROM THE WINDSHIELD OF AN RUC VEHICLE HIT BY RIFLE FIRE.

4. MURDER ATTEMPTS AGAINST SECURITY FORCES HAVE BEEN FREQUENT. BUT THESE APPEAR TO FOLLOW A DIFFERENT PATTERN: THEY ARE URBAN, OCCURRED IN A SHORT PERIOD, AND WERE INDISCRIMINATE IN THAT THEY APPEARED DIRECTED AGAINST REGULAR SECURITY FORCES (NOT SPECIFIC PERSONS) AND SHOWED A WILLINGNESS TO FIRE WITHOUT REGARD TO ENDANGERING BYSTANDERS. PARTICULARLY, THE SOLDIER WOUNDED AUGUST 31 WAS GUARDING THE INNER CITY BARRIER A HALF BLOCK FROM THE CG OFFICE. THE THREE SHOTS FIRED FROM AN ARMALITE RIFLE IN FRONT OF A CHURCH JUST OUTSIDE THE BARRIER PASSED THROUGH CIVILIAN VEHICLES PARKED JUST ACROSS THE STREET FROM THE CONSULATE. ANYONE COULD HAVE BEEN HIT ON A FAIRLY BUSY STREET.

5. THERE IS SPECULATION THAT THE PIRA IMPORTED A KILLER FOR THESE JOBS, EITHER AN EXPERT FROM THE BORDER AREA, OR ONE FROM ABROAD. THE PEACE MOVEMENT ADOPTED THIS THESIS IN AN ELOQUENT CALL FOR PEOPLE TO TURN SUSPECTS IN. BUT THE PIRA DENIED IMPORTING ANYONE TO DO THEIR WORK, AND ANOTHER THESIS IS THAT THE WAVE REFLECTS DIFFERING TENDENCIES WITHIN THE ORGANIZATION. THUS, THE PIRA LEADERSHIP, SUPPOSEDLY CONCERNED BY LOSS OF COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND EFFECTIVE POLICE UNCLASSIFIED

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WORK, IS BECOMING MORE CAUTIOUS. ON THE OTHER HAND, PIRA HOT HEADS -- SMARTING AT THE IMAGE OF PIRA IMPOTENCE AFTER THREATS AGAINST THE QUEEN WERE NOT CARRIED OUT, AND REACTING TO THEIR LEADER'S CAUTION -- ARE OUT TO PROVE THEMSELVES.

6. WE ARE SKEPTICAL ABOUT THE IMPORTED KILLER IDEA, ALTHOUGH THERE WAS SIMILAR TALK AT THE KILLING OF THE BRITISH AMBASSADOR IN DUBLIN. EVIDENCE FOR THE SECOND THESIS IS LACKING. ITS VERIFICATION WOULD IMPLY THAT THE PIRA IS IN SERIOUS LONG RANGE TROUBLE. BUT IN THE SHORTER RANGE, A FEW CARELESS HOT HEADS OUT TO MAKE A SHOW COULD DO MUCH HARM.

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## Message Attributes

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